

## Oral history with 82 year old female, Fruita, Colorado. (Transcription)

A 10 B (5)

L.L. That was the best time in my life. You don't believe it, but---

E.K. Was it a smooth trip? Was the sea rough?

L.L. For them it was rough, 'cause they was sick, but for me, I--- just enjoy it. And at night we go --- you know 'cause they're sick. If you're sick, after supper, they take you up there fresh air. In the day time, too. Daytime, you talk to different people, too. You know, from here, from different here, you know, different town, different everywhere. I tell them what I did when I was home and they tell me what they was do when they was --- you know. And then in the night you retire. They tell you you have to go to bed, you go.

A.I. Luisa, were most of the people on the boat from Italy?

L.L. No, they was of everywhere.

A.I. Did you speak English at the time or just Italian?

L.L. Are you kidding?

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A.I. I don't know.

E.K. No, we'd like to know.

L.L. Oh my goodness. You know what I talk in English? "NO." Because it's <the same word?>

E.K. I thought so.

L.L. "No." You say "no" over there. You say "no" here.

E.K. That's all you knew?

L.L. "Yes", it isn't the same. "Si." When you say "Yes", "Si."

E.K. That's the same as Spanish.

L.L. Yeah. Are you kidding? Me talking English?

E.K. Luisa, had you had --- see, you would have been about twenty-one, so---

L.L. I come in 19--- I told you--- 21, May the third. I get off---

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E.K. You had your birthday. You had one of your birthdays here.

L.L. I had 'em on the boat.

E.K. Oh, they celebrated on the boat.

L.L. They don't celebrate on the boat.

E.K. You mean they didn't bake you a cake?

L.L. They didn't do it.

E.T. They probably didn't know. (laughter) Were you--before you <came to?> this <country?> had there been certain work that you did (because you were a young woman) <and that?> were you trained to do?

L.I. You know what I was training to do? Get up early in the morning. <unintelligible text> no lie, no nothing. Get up early in the morning and you get --- <unintelligible text> you call it? Manure, put 'em inside of basket. You know manure? <unintelligible text>

A.I. Manure.

E.K. Manure, yes. I was raised on <a farm?>

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L.L. Put 'em in a basket, or sack, <unintelligible text> put 'em on the head and <unintelligible text> And you put em --- you know, <spread?>

E.K. Put the fertilizer out.

L.L. Right. And you spread. Another time you cut hay. Another time you <unintelligible text> whatever. Chestnuts. That's my work. Pack the stuff. This is <unintelligible text> have the stuff that I pack on my head, I just decided, that <unintelligible text>. That's my work.

E.K. So you were raised on a farm then and the girls and the women <worked right?> with the men.

L.L. You better believe it. And then the one that stay home (<unintelligible text>) they cook breakfast and they take 'em in the field. And you <eat?> breakfast in the field. At noon they bring---you know, dinner. You call 'em lunch.

E.K. But the mid-meal.

L.L. At noon is dinner.

E.K. Right. And supper in the evening

<e.??>

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L.L. That's right.

E.K. But you would have supper at home?

L.L. At home.

E.K. What would you have for supper, after a hard day?

L.L. Soup.

E.K. What would you have for lunch?

L.L. Whatever they cook.

E.K. But you had a big lunch?

L.L. Well, the best they could. Everybody was poor, and we come over here, we're still poor.

E.K. But most of the things that you had to eat you raised?

L.L. Every bit of it. Every bit of it we raised. Not too far away from us, we <put?> the stuff on our head and take it down and there was like a mill. That right?

E.K. Uh huh.

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L.L. Where, you know, make it go with the water.

E.K. Oh yes, the mill wheel.

L.L. Yeah. And make the flour out of the corn.

E.K. Oh, you made your own flour.

L.L. You better believe it.

E.K. How many children in your family?

L.L. Five. Four girl and one boy. But the boy pass away and <unintelligible text> was still over there. And the rest, they die after I was <unintelligible text> you know what is chestnuts?

E.K. Yes.

L.L. Is the main food over there. I don't mean Italy. Where I <unintelligible text> call it <Nontale?> North of Italy.

E.K. North of Italy. That's where the chestnuts weere?

L.L. Yeah. And that's the main food that they eat over there.

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E.K. Would they also sell them? Export them? Would they sell them or just have <them for?> their family?

L.L. We didn't have no 'nough to sell. We just use it.

E.K. Um Hum.

A.I. <gap> you didn't have any horses or anything, no that's why you had to <unintelligible text>.

L.L. No. The first horse that I saw, when I come over here.

E.K. Is that right?

L.L. That is the truth.

A.I. What was the center of your life in Italy? The church was <unintelligible text> and your neighbors.

L.L. If you're alive, unless you sick in bed (really sick) you <unintelligible text>. After church, they --- you know <unintelligible text> they have music <unintelligible text> it

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was specially three --- you know, my really, really <unintelligible text> in North Italia and she's <unintelligible text> sit down and sing and the old <unintelligible text> talk and <unintelligible text>

E.K. So your recreation was really <gap> after church? <unintelligible text>

L.L. Working. Working.

E.K. But on Sunday you had a little time off.

L.L. On Sunday, we didn't work. I don't care whater ever was to do, <unintelligible text> is the truth.

E.K. Did---I wonder, did you sometimes <sing?> with you work?

L.L. Alway. Okay. At noon, like I say, you know --- not in the <unintelligible text> breakfast and we eat it and, you know, each one go on with <unintelligible text>. Oh dear, what you call'em? I don't know what you call it. Hoe?

E.K. Hoe? Yeah.

L.L. Yeah. Hold that, hold that spade---you know, shovel?

E.K. Hold the sapde, um hum.



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L.L. You know, then you cut hay, then you pack hay, they you ---everything. You pack out and you pack in.

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OH-636 #1 <unintelligible text>

A.I. What did you do about clothes? Did You make your own?

L.L. Yeah. Every bit of it. Pretty well. But, like tablecloth, pillow case, sheets, you know --- everything. You raise the stuff. You plant the stuff, you know, and then you pick it. And then --- there's two kinds. Onea come --- it's all mix --- onea come way up high. You go through this field and pull out the tall one. You make a bundle, then you tie 'em and put 'em in the water. You know, like to wear.

A.I. Flax.

L.P. Okay.

L.L. No foolin'. And then when the other was ripe, that's the best one, the short one, what we make every day the pillow case, the sheets, the tablecloth, and --- we raise the stuff.

E.K. You raised the ---

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L.L. The stuff that made ---

E.K. The crop that mnde the fabric.

L.L. Right. And we made that, too.

E.k. Did you weave it?

L.L. You bet. This is the truth. I ---

E.K. Was the crop flax?

L.L. We call them canapa, but I don't know what you call ---

E.K. You call it what?

L.L. Flix? What do you call 'em?

E.K. Flax.

L.L. Flax? I don't know what you call 'em.

E.K. What do you call it?

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LL. Canapa.

E.K. Canapa. It's probably an Italian word.

L.L. Well, like I say, they put 'em in the --

E.K. But you didn't have sheep?

L.L. Yeah.

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E.K. You had sheep?

L.L. Not too many.

E.K. And did you spin the wool?

L.L. We spin the wool.

E.K. Knit the sweaters?

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L.L. Knit the sweater. Knit the socks. They don't got --- you think they got clothes like they got here, over there?

E.K. Not even now?

L.L. I cannot tell you.

E.K. But at that time they didn't?

L.L. No way. Nobody. And it's a creek. You know, running water <not just like from here?> ---oh, it's a little farther than --- you see that car over there?

E.K. Um hum. About how far would that be?

A.I. An eighth of a mile.

E.K. About an eighth of a mile.

L.L. You see that brush over there?

E.K. Um hum.

L.L. That's where the creek was. If you was there, you wash your clothes in the creek and shake on a rock and then put over fence or some ---

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E.K. What did you use for soap?

L.L. Home made soap.

E.K. How did you make it? Do you still have the recipe?

L.L. I made a lot of it. I still got some.

E.K. What do you put in it?

L.L. Lye.

E.K. Is it quite a process to make?

L.L. I didn't make it over there. My mamma --- I don't know.

E.K. But you have your mother's recipe?

L.L. I don't got no recipe.

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<unintelligible text>

E.K. How do you make it then? Can you tell me how to make It?

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L.L. I tell --- the recipe that I make, that's on the lye can.

E.K. You make the one that's on the lye can. Okay.

L.L. So many pound of lard and so much water and one can of lye.

E.K. I thought maybe you had your mother's recipe.

A.I. Were you glad to leave Italy then?

L.L. No, I wasn't.

E.K. Why did you leave?

L.L. God knows. I don't know.

E.K. We wondered what brought you to that decision.

L.L. I come---well---

E.K. Now you and <gap> knew each other before?

L.L. Very well.

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E.K. And he put --- he probably wanted to come.

L.L. This is the way it come to it. He wrote to his oldest brother <unintelligible text> working. The oldest brother?

E.K. Um hum.

L.L. Workin' the steel work?

E.K. <CF?> and I? In Pueblo? Okay.

L.L. Yeah. And see <gap> was too young and his old brother took him, like --- you know, their kid.

E.K. How old was <gap> to be working in the mine?

L.L. I don't know. He was too you to be by himself. And his wife <unintelligible text> come back home, so <gap> had to come home, too, 'cause he couldn't <unintelligible text> was too young. When he got over there, they got him in the service. Three year.

E.K. Oh, he was in the army? The Italian army.

L.L. Three year.

E.K. Was that during World War I?

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L.L. World War I, he was over here.

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E.K. Oh. But they were required to have this training?

L.L. Yeah. Three year.

E.K. Okay.

L.L. And he come home 'cause Peter took --- oh.

E.K. That's all right. You're not hurting a thing.

L.L. I hope not.

E.K. No, you're not.

L.L. He say so many time they want him to stay in the service, 'cause I guess he was good. He say, "You have to kill me if you want me to stay." So, when he got back here, they got him three year and there was war here. Yeah, that---so <unintelligible text> that brother that he is close down there, he was in Utah. That's where he was. And the other brother bought a little --- no, not bought---homestead <unintelligible text>.



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E.K. Homestead. Um hum. But <gap> you say, was in Utah? Is that what you said.

L.L. He was in Utah. Work in the mine.

E.K. Working in the mine in Utah.

L.L. Coal mine.

stop